

Dec. 16 - 22, 2013 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

The week of December 16 started off cold with a wintry mix in some parts of the state. Waters opened by a mild thaw late last week became ice covered again as night time lows dipped into the upper teens and low 20's. Moderating temperatures by the later part of the week will reopen many areas that have been iced over. New open water should result in increased bird movement as they seek out new open water areas. The forecast for this weekend is for mild temperatures and maybe projections for substantial participation in some areas. This may result in some backwater flooding which should improve hunting along the major river systems.

Ground counts obtained from major use areas were relatively unchanged from the previous week. There were over 105,000 birds, mostly mallard, reported on Ballard, Boatwright and Doug Travis WMA. The two lakes Kentucky and Barkley have held several thousand birds an equal mix of puddle and diving ducks. Sloughs reported about 11,000 ducks and about 8,000 geese, about an equal number of snow geese and white-fronted geese. Few Canada geese were reported on the area. As you go further east waterfowl counts are spotty, primarily because it is difficult to find good observation locations. Decent duck numbers have been reported on most of these areas and reports of good hunting have been received. Some areas of interest are Barren River, Green River, Cedar Creek and Cave Run just to name a few. However remember to exercise extreme caution when hunting these areas. The lakes are dangerous during the winter. Always wear your flotation device when hunting these areas.

Hunting outlook for the week ahead looks promising. Here at KDFWR we wish all waterfowl enthusiasts across the Commonwealth a very Merry Christmas.

Below is a listing of ground counts made by local KDFWR wildlife biologists. The locations and counts presented below probably represent a minimal number of what can be expected listed on the surveyed areas. Good hunting!

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA 12/19/13	57,830 ducks 430 CG 4,800 WFG	85% mallard, 5% gadwall, 5% ring-necked duck remainder wigeon, green-winged teal, pintail and black duck.	Big pump ran until 17 th , putting more water on new food. Ice/snow melt helped replenish low water levels.
Birdsville Island	No count		
Kentucky/Barkley Lakes	No Count		
Duck Island	612 ducks 120 coots	50% green-winged teal, 40% mallard, remainder gadwall and black duck	Central impoundment with skim ice. Will probably freeze later in week.
Boatwright WMA Last counted 12/19/13	33,200 ducks 22 CG	84% mallard, 6% ring-necked duck, remainder gadwall, black duck and wood duck.	Abundance of moist soil food available in hunt units, birds starting to spread out.
Doug Travis WMA 12/18/13	2,350 ducks	95% mallard, remainder a mix of dabblers and ring-necked ducks	Area thawing but still 65% still frozen. Wells still on.
Clear Creek WMA	No Count		
Peabody WMA	1,412 ducks 300 CG 1 Swan 4 Coot	75% mallard, remainder gadwall with a few wigeon, teal and divers.	Shallow water mostly frozen beginning of week. Water opening as week progressed.

Sloughs WMA	8,000 ducks 5,000 WFG 3,000 SG 550 CG 75 Swan	80% mallard.	Birds using winter wheat/standing corn. Shallow water remains frozen. Most birds on refuge. Hunting effort low on public and private lands
Yellowbank WMA	1,170 ducks	90% mallard, 5% black duck, 5% gadwall.	Most birds on refuge. Many MSU's still have ice.
Hardin County	175 Sandhill Cr.		
Larue County	450 Sandhill Cr.		
Barren River Lake 12/16/13	No waterfowl count 8,166 Sandhill Cr.		Lake +14 feet above summer pool. Sandhills counted near roost.
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	210 ducks 85 CG	40% Mallard, 30 ring-necked duck, 25% gadwall.	Waters levels high on lakes. MSU at 75% capacity.
Herrington Lake	No Count		
Taylorsville Lake	4 duck	3 hooded merganser, 1 black duck	Lake 2' above winter pool and falling. MSU's full.
Cedar Cr./Dix R. WMA	No Count		
Green River WMA	No Count		
Cave Run Lake	300 ducks 225 CG	33% mallard, 10% gadwall, remainder assorted divers, redhead, scaup, bufflehead, ring-neck duck	Lake open small enclosed embayments with sheet ice. MSU's surrounding lake are ice-locked